

# GRACE NOTES DECEMBER 2024/JANUARY 2025

A Monthly publication of Grace Free Lutheran Church Valley City, ND

## **Come Early and Stay Late** **By Pastor Dennis Norby**

*For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God (1 Corinthians 1:18).*

I recently read an article entitled, “Make the Most of Sunday Mornings,” in which the writer, Matt Smethurst, spoke about what he called two small changes that he thought would help people make the most of their Sunday mornings. He wasn’t making any miraculous claims and wasn’t aiming to put more burdens on anyone for which I am thankful. He simply desires to encourage a couple of changes to help us receive from God more of the gifts He desires to pour out to us. Smethurst called the two suggestions 1) Come hungry, leave full and 2) Come early, stay late. I would like to summarize a few of his thoughts and share some applications for us.

When the author suggested, “Come hungry, leave full” he was really encouraging us to come ready to hear the preached word. He had two points to help in this, the first was to simply be in prayer for the preacher and yourself as a listener as you gather to hear God’s Word. The second was to know the text that was going to be preached. This struck me because one of my favorite parts of the week is our Saturday Men’s prayer time when we go over the text that will be preached the following day. I make preparations throughout the week, and it is a great blessing to talk through that text with others on Saturdays. I am greatly blessed as well because as we go through the text, I know that a number of men are not going to come to worship “cold” the next day. They will have been thinking about the text and its meaning and will be able to receive God’s Word in a powerful way because they have already been meditating on the passage. So, men, I would invite you to come to our Saturday Men’s prayer time. It is a great blessing. Even if you are not able to come, please note that each week we have the texts for the following Sunday listed in the bulletin. Take a look at them. Read them; meditate upon them, it will be a blessing to you when you gather with others to hear those words preached on Sunday morning. In addition to that, I am hoping in the new year to try and make it a regular

practice to have some type of regular format for sharing those passages with you. Stay tuned for more information on that.

The second point, “Come early, stay late” was an encouragement to arrive early so that the craziness of the morning, often filled with frustrations and delays, will not cause you to miss part of the service or to feel rushed as you arrive. The stay late portion of the article encouraged people to stick around and visit with the people you have just worshiped with and to take time to talk about what you just experienced together. To speak about the message, the music, the encouragement you received from being together. The author rightly noted in his article the strange phenomenon that we often gather to worship and hear God’s Word but then feel awkward talking about what we had just seen and heard. Even though we just experienced it all together! I would add the encouragement that the stay late idea can and should be extended to speaking about the worship service after you have left, with your friends and family you are with. Sometimes people have joked that the Sunday meal shouldn’t be “roast pastor.” The idea being that it can be a time to complain about this point or that in the sermon or for failing to remark upon something. I suppose that could be a problem if people are simply looking to tear things apart, but I don’t worry about that necessarily. Honestly, I would rather there be a serving of “roast pastor” than to not talk about the word that has just been preached. As you have the opportunity, speak about God’s Word after the service. It will help you cement in your mind God’s truth and clarify, correct, or emphasize something you heard in the message. What a great opportunity for iron to sharpen iron (Proverbs 27:17).

So then, I pray that you might consider these couple of changes or adjustments so that you might receive and enjoy more of the gifts that God desires to deliver to you. God desires to bless you together with others when we gather on Sunday mornings. Come and rejoice in His gracious gifts.

## Grace Free Lutheran Council Meetings



Thursday, December 12, 2024  
Deacons Meet 6:30pm  
Boards Meet 7pm  
Council Meets 8pm

Thursday, January 9, 2025  
Deacons Meet 6:30 PM  
Boards Meet 7pm  
Council Meets 8pm

## Grace Annual Congregational Meeting

# ANNUAL MEETING

Sunday, January 19, 2025  
A potluck will follow the worship  
service. The meeting will begin at  
approximately 12:30pm.

**\*\*In case of bad weather the backup  
date is January 26.  
All board/committee reports are due in  
the church office by January 8, 2025.**

*Complete Council meeting minutes and monthly  
financial report are available in the copy room.*

### Financial Summary

As of 11/30/2024

General Fund=\$59,783.30

Building Improvement Fund=\$38,256.83

(Sign=\$897.78; Parking Lot=\$14,859.05;  
Exterior Maintenance=\$3,500.00; Roof=\$19,000.00)

Scholarship Fund=\$2,692.80

Seminary Fund=\$0.00

General Fund CD (1)=\$42,218.99

General Fund CD (2)=\$31,666.34

General Fund CD (3)=\$25,000.00

Parking Lot Fund CD=\$37,667.92

Roof Fund CD=\$66,685.08

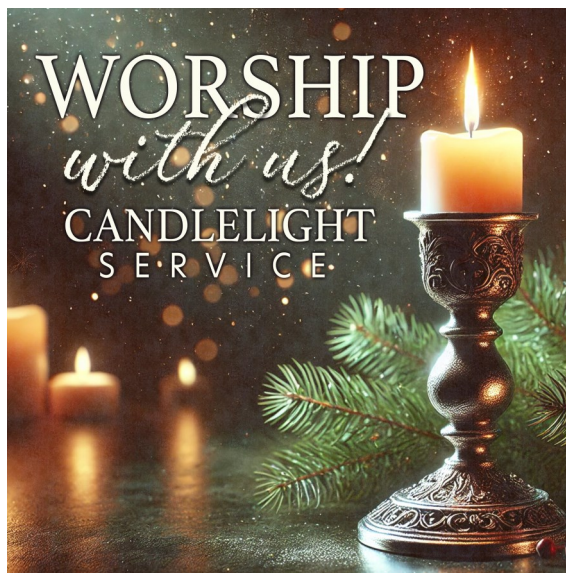
Exterior Maintenance Fund CD=\$60,000

Building Fund CD=\$25,000.00

## Zion's Schedule

### Sundays

9am Divine Worship  
10am Fellowship



Christmas Eve Candlelight Service  
at Grace

Tuesday, December 24, 5:00pm



**It's that time  
of year again!**

If church services or activities are canceled  
due to weather the announcement will be  
sent via email, posted on the Grace Free  
Facebook page & Grace Free Website,  
announced on KOVC radio 1490AM and  
Valley News Live (Channel 4 & 11).  
Sunday morning worship services are  
livestreamed on Facebook, YouTube and  
our website [www.gracefree.com](http://www.gracefree.com)

Services are also archived on our website.



## AFLC Ministry Focus for January

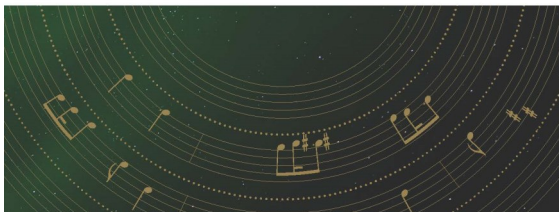
### *The Lutheran Ambassador*

Did you know the AFLC publishes a monthly magazine and you can receive this magazine for free?

The Lutheran Ambassador exists to educate its readers about the AFLC, to encourage the local congregation, to equip Christians for service, and to evangelize our neighbors and the world. Since 2022, The Lutheran Ambassador magazine is free of charge to subscribers!

For more information visit [aflc.org/lutheran-ambassador/](http://aflc.org/lutheran-ambassador/) Here you can start a subscription, view current and past editions, and make tax-deductible donations to help cover the costs of the producing *The Lutheran Ambassador*.

**\*\*Look for recent issues of *The Lutheran Ambassador* in the Grace fellowship hall.**



### **WMF Quarterly Meeting**

Monday, December 9, 7pm

### **Quilting**

Thursday, December 12, 1pm

Thursday, January 9, 1pm

### **WMF Bible Study**

Monday, December 16, 7pm

Monday, January 20, 7pm

### **Faith Circle**

December TBA

Tuesday, January 28, 9am

### **Women's Bible Study**

Thursdays at 10am beginning

January 16

### **Men's Prayer**

Saturdays at 7am

The **Thursday morning ladies Bible study** will begin a new 8 week study on January 16. The study is *Believing Jesus* (a study on the book of Acts) by Lisa Harper. If you are interested, please contact Val Reinsel 814-715-3022.

## **Sanctity of Human Life Sunday January 19, 2025**

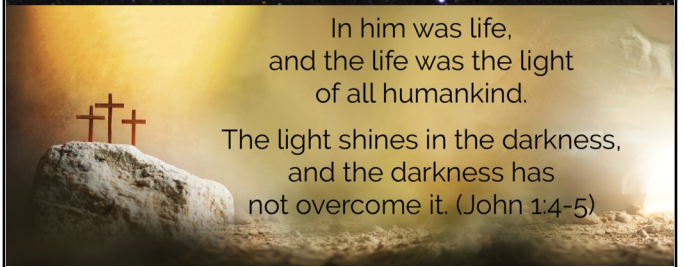
**"Life Shines in Darkness"**

A special offering will be taken at Grace for the Life Fund. The distribution of funds will be voted on at the annual meeting.

Jesus Christ has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light. (2 Timothy 1:10)

In him was life,  
and the life was the light  
of all mankind.

The light shines in the darkness,  
and the darkness has  
not overcome it. (John 1:4-5)





# Children's Ministry News

**Sunday, December 1-**

Program practice at 9am

**Wednesday, December 4-**

"Answers for Kids" (prek-6th gr) 7pm

**Sunday, December 8-**

Program practice 9am

**Wednesday, December 11-**

Supper for kids at 6pm

Program practice 6:30-8pm

**Sunday, December 15-**

Program practice 9am

**Wednesday, December 18-**

Caroling and pizza 5:30pm

\*\*If we need a practice from 7-8 we will let you know.

**Saturday, December 21-**

Dress Rehearsal 9:30-11am

**Sunday, December 22-**

Program practice 9am

Christmas Program 4pm

Supper served following the program

Sunday School resumes January 5, 2024

AFK resumes January 8, 2024

Grace Kids

You are invited

Saturday, Dec. 14th from 2-4

Movie :

A Charlie Brown Christmas

Snack :

Popcorn & Cocoa

Craft :

Gingerbread Houses

Game :

Musical Chairs



Contact : Erin Dahl 388.0631



Join us for caroling **Wednesday,**  
**December 18 at 5:30pm.**  
Pizza will be served after.



Youth Group meets  
Wednesday nights at  
7pm in the youth room.

Come Party  
with   
Mardy  
on  
New Year's Eve!



Dec. 31st/ @ Grace/ @ 5pm

Food, Games, Fellowship

Bring snacky-appetizer type  
foods to share



Contact Erin Dahl 388-0631



Ladies Craft Weekend~  
January 31-February 1

Grace & Zion Art Show~  
February 23

- |                              |                         |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 2 Madelyn Hoots (Nathan)     |                         |
| 3 Rebekah Norby (Dennis)     |                         |
| 4 Ann Anderson               |                         |
| 5 Diane Olson                |                         |
| 6 Jackie Hafele              |                         |
| Greg Shanenko                |                         |
| Tim Hass                     |                         |
| David Peterson               | 22 Kari Kietzman        |
| Evie Sorensen                | 23 Troy Hanson          |
| 7 Megan Sorensen             | 24 Noel Murray          |
| 9 Tasha Glasman              | 25 Lisa VanBruggen      |
| 10 Lexi Grotberg             | 26 Sarah Meester        |
| Faith Peterson (Brent)       | 27 Waylon Halberg       |
| 11 Theo Herzog               | (Jessa)                 |
| 13 Makenna Kietzman (Joshua) | Claire Hass(Tim)        |
| 15 Meredith Hovda (Kevin)    | 28 Carter Hass(Tim)     |
| 16 Vicki Hass                | 29 Carson Hass (Tim)    |
| 17 Robert Fischer (Jennifer) | Kris McLean             |
| Evan Schroeder (Josh)        | 31 Allie Hafele (Jessa) |
| 18 Mike Kjelland             | Myron VanBruggen        |
| 19 Julie Hass                | <b>Missionaries</b>     |
| Paige Powers                 | 21 Josiah Wagner (Josh) |
| Kathy Laumb                  | 24 Joshua Wagner        |
| 21 Rachel Melvin (Randy)     |                         |
| Samantha Norby               |                         |



- |                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| 1 Samuel Borg (Kevin)     |  |
| Rachel Drummond           |  |
| (John)                    |  |
| 3 Becky Pfennig           |  |
| 4 Cheryll Borg            |  |
| Teresa Perleberg          |  |
| 5 Hunter Berntson (Tim)   |  |
| Caleb Norby (Dennis)      |  |
| Sarah Miller              |  |
| 6 Tucker Perleberg (Jeff) |  |
| 8 Richard Hass            |  |
| 12 Seth Zeltinger         |  |
| 15 Isaac Norby (Dennis)   |  |
| Matt Powers               |  |
| 20 Sawyer Dahl (Mardy)    |  |
| Tory Hafele               |  |
| 22 Walt Schroeder         |  |
| 23 Abby Peterson          |  |
| Rachel Richman            |  |
| 24 Ava Shanenko (Jeremy)  |  |
| 25 Cody Roswick           |  |
| 26 Jeremy Shanenko        |  |
| 27 Nicole Powers          |  |
| 31 Trina Shanenko         |  |



- Missionaries**  
8 Ian Abel (2020)  
11 Tamba Abel  
22 Alexis Olson



# December



2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>1</p> <p>Sunday School 9am</p> <p>Fellowship 10am</p> <p>Divine Worship with Holy Communion 10:30am</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Confirmation 6pm</p> <p>Answers For Kids 7pm</p> <p>Youth Group 7pm</p> <p>Adult Bible Study 7pm</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Men's Prayer 7am</p>
<p>8</p> <p>Sunday School 9am</p> <p>Fellowship 10am</p> <p>Divine Worship 10:30am</p>	<p>9</p> <p>WMF Quarterly Meeting 7pm</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>11</p> <p>Confirmation 6pm</p> <p>Answers For Kids 7pm</p> <p>Youth Group 7pm</p> <p>Adult Bible Study 7pm</p>	<p>12</p> <p>Deacons Meet 6:30pm Boards Meet 7pm Council Meets 8pm</p> <p>Quilting 1pm</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p> <p>Men's Prayer 7am</p>
<p>15</p> <p>Sunday School 9am</p> <p>Fellowship 10am</p> <p>Divine Worship 10:30am</p>	<p>16</p> <p>WMF Bible Study 7pm</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>18</p> <p>CAROLING 5:30pm</p> <p>Pizza served following caroling</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21</p> <p>Men's Prayer 7am</p> 
<p>22</p> <p>Sunday School 9am Fellowship 10am Divine Worship 10:30am</p> <p>Christmas Program 4pm Supper following program</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p>  <p>Christmas Eve Candlelight Service 5pm</p>	<p>25</p> 	<p>26</p> <p>Church Office Closed</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p> <p>Men's Prayer 7am</p>
<p>29</p> <p>Divine Worship 10:30am</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31</p>  <p>New Year's Eve Party 5pm</p>				 <p><b>Save the Date!</b> <b>Ladies Craft Weekend</b> <b>January 31-February 1</b></p>

# january



2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 	2	3	4 Men's Prayer 7am
5 Sunday School 9am  Fellowship 10am  Divine Worship with Holy Communion 10:30am	6	7	8 Confirmation 6pm  Answers For Kids 7pm  Youth Group 7pm  Adult Bible Study 7pm	9 Deacons Meet 6:30pm Boards Meet 7pm Council Meets 8pm  Quilting 1pm	10	11 Men's Prayer 7am
12 Sunday School 9am  Fellowship 10am  Divine Worship 10:30am	13	14	15 Confirmation 6pm  Answers For Kids 7pm  Youth Group 7pm  Adult Bible Study 7pm	16 Women's Bible Study 10am	17	18 Men's Prayer 7am
19 Sunday School 9am Fellowship 10am Divine Worship 10:30am <b>ANNUAL MEETING</b> Potluck 11:45am Annual Meeting 12:30pm	20 WMF Bible Study 7pm	21	22 Confirmation 6pm  Answers For Kids 7pm  Youth Group 7pm  Adult Bible Study 7pm	23 Women's Bible Study 10am	24	25 Men's Prayer 7am
26 Sunday School 9am  Fellowship 10am  Divine Worship 10:30am	27	28 Faith Circle 11am	29 Confirmation 6pm  Answers For Kids 7pm  Youth Group 7pm  Adult Bible Study 7pm	30 Women's Bible Study 10am	31  <b>Ladies Craft Weekend January 31- February 1</b>	



**GRACE FREE LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**2351 WEST MAIN ST.**  
**VALLEY CITY ND 58072**



**GRACE & ZION FREE LUTHERAN CHURCHES**

«AddressBlock»

**Sundays at Grace**

Sunday School 9:00 AM  
Divine Worship 10:30 AM

**Sundays at Zion**

Divine Worship 9:00 AM  
Fellowship 10:00 AM

**Sundays:** Lift High the Cross KOVC (1490) 10 AM KSJB(600) 8 AM  
**Watch Live!** Sunday Mornings at 10:30 AM at [www.gracefree.com/watch-online](http://www.gracefree.com/watch-online)

**Church office hours are 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM, Mon-Fri**

**Phone: (701) 845-2753**

**E-mail: [gracefree@msn.com](mailto:gracefree@msn.com)**

**Website: [www.gracefree.com](http://www.gracefree.com)**

**Senior Pastor Dennis Norby** [thenorbys@msn.com](mailto:thenorbys@msn.com)  
**Administrative Assistant~ Sarah Meester** [gracefree@msn.com](mailto:gracefree@msn.com)  
**Children's Ministry Leader~ Erin Dahl**